



REVIEW

Comparative analysis of institutional accreditation systems in higher education: Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile

Análisis comparativo de los sistemas de acreditación institucional en educación superior: Paraguay, Argentina y Chile

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Cite as: Li IH. Comparative analysis of institutional accreditation systems in higher education: Paraguay, Argentina and Chile. *Seminars in Medical Writing and Education*. 2025; 4:727. <https://doi.org/10.56294/mw2025727>

Submitted: 16-06-2024

Revised: 25-12-2024

Accepted: 10-06-2025

Published: 11-06-2025

Editor: PhD. Prof. Estela Morales Peralta 

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: institutional accreditation is an important mechanism for ensuring quality in higher education.

Objective: the objective of this research was to analyze, from a comparative perspective, the institutional accreditation systems in higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile in accordance with the regulations in force for the year 2024.

Method: the study adopted a qualitative, documentary-comparative approach based on the analysis of national laws, institutional portals of accrediting agencies, and 18 recent academic studies.

Results: the results showed that Paraguay prioritizes social relevance under voluntary schemes; Argentina implements mandatory evaluations with regulatory rigidity; Chile stands out for its progressive model, although with biases in accreditation decisions and disciplinary rigidity. The three countries share challenges such as the gap between administrative compliance and tangible results.

Conclusions: it is concluded that, despite advances in institutional structures, the systems require reforms that balance standardization with flexibility and transparency with autonomy.

Keywords: University Accreditation; Quality Assurance; Educational Quality; Higher Education; Academic Management.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la acreditación institucional constituye un mecanismo significativo para garantizar la calidad en la educación superior.

Objetivo: la presente investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar desde una perspectiva comparativa los sistemas de acreditación institucional en educación superior de Paraguay, Argentina y Chile de acuerdo con la normatividad vigente para el año 2024.

Método: el estudio adoptó un enfoque cualitativo de tipo documental-comparativo, basado en el análisis de leyes nacionales, portales institucionales de agencias acreditadoras y 18 investigaciones académicas recientes.

Resultados: los resultados evidenciaron que Paraguay prioriza la pertinencia social bajo esquemas voluntarios; Argentina implementa evaluaciones obligatorias con rigidez normativa; Chile destaca por su modelo progresivo, aunque con sesgos en decisiones de acreditación y rigidez disciplinaria. Los tres países comparten desafíos como la brecha entre cumplimiento administrativo y resultados tangibles.

Conclusiones: se concluye que, pese a los avances en estructuras institucionales, los sistemas requieren reformas que equilibren estandarización con flexibilidad y transparencia con autonomía.

Palabras clave: Acreditación Universitaria; Aseguramiento de la Calidad; Calidad Educativa; Educación Superior; Gestión Académica.

INTRODUCTION

Quality in higher education is a determining factor for the progress of contemporary societies. This level of schooling reaches its maximum potential when teaching staff, under strategic leadership, implement effective planning, coordination, and academic management processes.^(1,2) According to Yepes and Gutiérrez⁽³⁾ educational excellence is manifested when teaching practices stimulate cognitive development, comprehensive training, and the productive capacities of students. Martínez et al.⁽⁴⁾ complement this view by associating quality with the achievement of outstanding results in standardized assessments, supported by robust pedagogical models and institutional management systems aligned with local and global objectives. To achieve these goals, universities face the ongoing challenge of articulating themselves within educational systems that must reconcile academic rigor with the ability to respond to social dynamics.^(5,6)

Faced with this complexity, Wang et al.⁽⁷⁾ point out that many countries base the quality of their educational systems on institutional accreditation processes. These systems take various organizational forms, from national certification committees to mixed models, which operate in coordination with government regulatory bodies. González et al.⁽⁸⁾ emphasize that this mechanism meets contemporary demands for educational quality by establishing verifiable parameters for evaluating the achievement of academic objectives, administrative management effectiveness, and the social relevance of institutions. In addition, the system gives public recognition to those entities that demonstrate adequate or higher levels of quality, which serves as a tool for continuous improvement.⁽⁹⁾

Institutional accreditation is a continuously evolving process, which has now become a requirement for an institution to have official validity and be able to operate in almost all higher education systems. The evolution of this process aligns with the evolution in the field of higher education, as education in general and higher education in particular represent a process of continuous development, movement, redesign, and constant change.^(10,11,12,13)

In this context, Zúñiga and Camacho.⁽¹⁴⁾ emphasize that accreditation processes function as evaluation mechanisms that provide strategic information for institutional decision-making. These systems measure the degree of compliance with pre-established quality standards, which generates valuable input for accrediting entities and the institutions being evaluated. Evaluation can be geared toward internal improvement or constitute a requirement for external accreditation. Moreira et al.⁽¹⁵⁾ broaden this perspective by pointing out that institutional evaluation is a fundamental strategy for ensuring the legitimacy of higher education institutions, as it allows regulatory bodies to monitor their performance and establish guidelines tailored to the specific contexts and needs of the education system.⁽¹⁶⁾

Despite these institutional advances, the Latin American experience in accreditation processes faces structural challenges, according to Martínez et al.⁽¹⁷⁾ Among the limitations described by the authors are an excessive focus on administrative aspects rather than educational outcomes; the risk of simulation in evaluation processes; bureaucratic growth not always associated with substantive improvements; questions about the credibility of accrediting bodies; and a mismatch between the discourse on competency-based education and traditional teaching practices. In the case of Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile, national accreditation systems have been developed that are adapted to their socio-educational realities, with the establishment of specific standards, self-evaluation mechanisms, and procedures that seek to respond to these challenges. However, the effectiveness of these adaptations requires critical analysis to examine their capacity to overcome the limitations identified.⁽¹⁸⁾

Given this scenario of achievements and challenges, it is pertinent to examine the specific characteristics of the quality criteria that underpin institutional evaluation models in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile. In this context, the following questions are posed: What are the characteristics of institutional accreditation in higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile according to the regulations in force for the year 2024? What standard and divergent elements are present in the quality criteria of the institutional accreditation systems of these countries? What are the laws and regulations in force that regulate accreditation in each country?

Research in response to these questions, involving a comparative analysis of the accreditation systems in these three countries, would make it possible to identify the particularities and points of convergence in their regulatory and operational models, thereby contributing to the contemporary debate on educational quality systems that combine standardization with contextual adaptability. The findings would provide evidence to support reforms in higher education public policies, guide decision-making processes at the institutional and national levels, and formulate specific recommendations to strengthen accreditation mechanisms and their alignment with international standards. For these reasons, the present research aimed to analyze, from a comparative perspective, the institutional accreditation systems in higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile, based on the regulations in force for the year 2024.

METHOD

The study adopted a qualitative, documentary-comparative approach, focusing on analyzing institutional

accreditation systems for higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile. The research phases included the collection of primary and secondary sources, critical analysis of the information, and systematization of results using comparative matrices.

For data collection, regulatory documents related to higher education and regulatory decrees of accrediting bodies were identified and retrieved; institutional portals (ANEAES, CONEAU, and CNA websites) to obtain updated data on evaluation processes, quality indicators, and accreditation results; as well as a search of 18 scientific studies published between 2021 and 2024 in the Scopus and SciELO academic databases, selected based on criteria of thematic relevance and verifiable empirical evidence.

The analysis examined each national system using structured technical data sheets that included the governing body, legal framework, objectives, nature of accreditation, evaluation dimensions, and international liaison strategies. For data processing, a thematic coding system was implemented that combined three analytical techniques: the classification of information into predefined categories, the triangulation of evidence between regulatory documents, institutional reports, and specialized literature, and the construction of comparative matrices (one cross-sectional and three national) that synthesized the findings of previous research.

RESULTS

Based on an exhaustive analysis of official documents, current regulations, and institutional websites of the accrediting agencies, a summary of the main characteristics of the institutional accreditation systems for higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile has been prepared and is presented in table 1. The data show significant elements regarding the quality criteria that each country applies in its accreditation processes, allowing for the identification of convergences and particularities in the models of these three national systems.

Table 1. Summary of the main elements of the institutional accreditation system in higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile

Category of analysis	Paraguay	Argentina	Chile
Responsible bodies	National Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (ANEAES)	National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU)	National Accreditation and Commission (CNA)
Legal basis	- Law No. 2072/2003 (ANEAES). - Law No. 4995/2013 (Higher Education).	- Law 24521/1995 (Higher Education). - Decree 173/1996 (CONEAU).	- Law 20.129/2006 (National Quality Assurance System). - Law 21,091/2018.
Year of implementation	Started in 2003 (institutional accreditation since 2021).	1995 (evaluation since 1996).	2006 (institutional and program accreditation mandatory since 2020).
Fundamental objective of accreditation	To ensure academic quality and social relevance.	Evaluate to improve core functions (teaching, research, outreach).	Certify quality with a focus on self-regulation and community engagement.
Nature of accreditation	Voluntary, although with evaluation mechanisms for undergraduate and graduate programs and institutions.	Mandatory institutional evaluation for universities, with an emphasis on adaptation to common standards.	Mandatory for institutions and programs, with an emphasis on quality and diversity of subsystems.
Frequency of evaluation	6-year cycles with continuous monitoring.	Evaluations every 6 years, with public reports.	Mandatory accreditation with variable periods depending on the level of accreditation (basic or advanced).
Dimensions	1. Governance management. 2. Administrative management and institutional development support. 3. Academic management. 4. Institutional information management and analysis. 5. Institutional social outreach management.	1. Local and regional context. 2. Institutional mission and project. Governance and management. 3. Academic management. 4. Research, development, and artistic creation. 5. Extension, technology production, and transfer. 6. Integration and interconnection of the university institution. 7. Libraries, documentation centers, publications.	1. Teaching and results of the educational process. 2. Strategic management and institutional resources. 3. Internal quality assurance. 4. Links with the environment. 5. Research, creation, and/or innovation.
International links	Under development (MERCOSUR support)	Partial alignment with RIACES	Recognition in global rankings

Government management	Focus on executive and strategic management, institutional policies, and decision-making.	Includes mission, institutional project, governance, organizational structure, and budget.	Addresses strategic objectives, resource management, and consistency with the institutional mission.
Academic Management	Coordination of academic programs, social relevance, and educational quality.	Evaluation of academic structure, faculty, admission and graduation policies.	Focus on teaching, educational outcomes, curricula, and faculty development.
Community Outreach	Relationship with the environment to advance knowledge and social development.	University extension, technological production, and knowledge transfer.	Policies for links with the local/national environment and impact on sustainable development.
Infrastructure and Resources	Quality of facilities, equipment, and technological resources.	Includes libraries, documentation centers, and information systems.	Assessment of physical infrastructure, equipment, and access to technologies.

As can be seen in table 1, the accreditation systems in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile share similarities in their institutional structure, as they have specialized national agencies (ANEAES, CONEAU, and CNA) that regulate the evaluation processes. All three countries have established specific legal frameworks to guarantee educational quality, although they differ in terms of how up-to-date they are. Paraguay and Argentina are governed by regulations from 2003 and 1995, respectively, while Chile has incorporated recent laws, such as Law 21.091/2018. In terms of accreditation, Paraguay adopts a voluntary approach with periodic evaluations, while Argentina mandates evaluations for universities. Chile, on the other hand, implements a compulsory progressive system, with dimensions activated in stages (2020-2025).

The frequency of evaluations is similar, with cycles of around six years, although Chile introduces variability according to the level of accreditation (basic or advanced). In terms of the dimensions evaluated, Paraguay is governed by five areas related to institutional and social management; Argentina expands this to seven, with an emphasis on research and university outreach; Chile synthesizes these into five, among which teaching, links with the environment, and research (the latter being voluntary) stand out. There are contrasts in international links, as Paraguay relies on regional agreements such as MERCOSUR, Argentina partially aligns itself with international standards (RIACES), and Chile achieves recognition in global rankings.

Table 2 summarizes five studies that analyzed fundamental dimensions of the higher education accreditation system in Paraguay. The studies document significant progress in the institutional processes promoted by ANEAES in the implementation of evaluation mechanisms. However, they also address persistent structural limitations such as the subjectivity inherent in assessment instruments, the disconnect between formal indicators and their translation into concrete results, and the limited demonstrable social impact of accreditation processes.

Table 2. Summary of research on the accreditation system in Paraguayan higher education

Author(s) / Objective of the Study	Methodology	Main findings	Recommendations
Cruz ⁽¹⁹⁾ / Analyze the challenges of the higher education system and propose policy reforms.	Reflection article with critical analysis of policies, legislation, and academic literature.	The Paraguayan system is making progress in enrollment and technology, but faces gaps between graduation, employability, and economic growth. Legislation (Laws 4995/13 and 2072/03) needs to be updated to strengthen autonomy and internationalization. Accreditation processes improve academic quality, but measure competencies and social impact in a limited way.	Update legislation to clarify autonomy, incorporate internationalization as a legal objective, and adjust evaluation mechanisms. Define clear standards and promote inter-institutional coordination.
Orue and Aguilera ⁽²⁰⁾ / Propose methodological innovation in the ANEAES assessment scale.	Qualitative documentary research with comparative analysis of scales.	The current ANEAES scale is disproportionate in the “partially compliant” category. The proposed maturity levels (initial, designed, managed, optimized) reduce subjectivity and offer logical progression in the evaluation.	Implement the maturity level matrix, train evaluators, and establish transition protocols between scales.
Barreto ⁽²¹⁾ / Evaluate accreditation reports for the Administration degree program (2019-2021).	Quantitative cross-sectional study with documentary analysis of eight reports.	The People (92,6 %) and Resources (80,2 %) dimensions have the highest compliance. Weaknesses are concentrated in Organization and Management (52,6 %) and Results and Impact (47,6 %). Public universities outperform the private university analyzed.	Strengthen the organizational structure and links with the environment. Prioritize job coverage and improve social impact processes to achieve academic excellence.

Cardozo ⁽²²⁾ / Reflect on the impact of continuous evaluation and the sustainability of improvements.	Reflection article with review of regulations, ANEAES reports, and specialized literature.	Accreditation drives improvement plans in critical areas, but there is a risk that it will become a formal process without profound transformations. Continuous evaluation reduces discretion and promotes a culture of quality.	Strengthen ANEAES processes, avoid accreditation as a marketing tool, and promote teacher professionalization. Ensure the sustainability of post-accreditation improvements.
Segovia ⁽²³⁾ / Describe progress in the implementation of the national evaluation and accreditation model.	Qualitative research with interviews with key actors and document analysis.	The MERCOSUR agreements facilitated the creation of ANEAES. Achievements consolidate evaluation mechanisms and increase social credibility. Challenges remain, such as institutional resistance, budget constraints, and a shortage of human resources.	Continue updating evaluation mechanisms, train peer evaluators, and strengthen inter-institutional work. Promote a culture of quality and efficient resource management.

The studies summarized in table 2 on the Paraguayan accreditation system highlight advances and tensions that complement or question the initial description. Cruz⁽²⁰⁾ agrees with the description in table 1 in recognizing the role of ANEAES in improving academic quality and alignment with regional agreements such as MERCOSUR. However, it identifies critical limitations that have not been addressed, such as current legislation (Laws 4995/2013 and 2072/2003), which need to be updated to guarantee full university autonomy and incorporate internationalization as an explicit mission objective. This finding contrasts with table 1, which mentions “international links under development” without questioning the absence of clear regulatory frameworks.

Table 3 summarizes five studies that examined relevant aspects of the higher education accreditation system in Argentina. The studies highlight the institutional advances promoted by CONEAU, particularly in the consolidation of mandatory evaluation processes. However, they also identify challenges such as regulatory rigidity that limits university autonomy, fragmentation between national and international standards, and tensions in governance models resulting from the implementation of LES 24521.

Table 3. Summary of research on the Argentine higher education accreditation system

Author(s) (Year) / Objective of the Study	Method	Main Findings	Recommendations
Calderón et al. ⁽²⁴⁾ / Identify weaknesses in Higher Education Law (LES) 24521 compared to regulations in Ecuador and Spain.	Comparative qualitative documentary analysis (LES 24521 vs. LOES Ecuador and LOU Spain).	The Argentine LES limits university autonomy in teacher selection, lacks guaranteed funding, and does not provide for equitable participation in governance. It does not require uniform quality standards or formal teacher training.	Reform the LES to expand autonomy, guarantee state funding, include plural participation in governing bodies, and implement mandatory quality standards.
Marquina et al. ⁽²⁵⁾ / Study the impact of quality assurance on university organizational structures.	Mixed methods, document analysis, surveys of quality staff, and in-depth interviews.	Universities created specific areas for quality, with dedicated professional profiles. Unlike in European cases, no tensions were observed between traditional sectors and new roles.	Develop public policies that monitor internal quality systems. Value specialized training for staff in quality assurance.
Leap ⁽²⁶⁾ / Examine differences in postgraduate accreditation by discipline and sector.	Qualitative approach with comparative analysis of academic programs.	Disciplines influence accreditation performance, with “soft pure” programs outperforming “hard” and “soft applied” programs. The institutional sector (public/private) does not determine results.	Consider disciplinary paradigms (hard/soft, pure/applied) in the design of quality policies. Avoid homogenization of criteria for all academic areas.
Antonio and Ganga ⁽²⁷⁾ / Analyze the impact of LES 24521 on university governance.	Documentary research based on a review of laws, articles, and documents.	The LES redefined the relationship between the state and universities by promoting evaluation and conditional funding. It has been questioned for limiting autonomy and aligning governance with international models of control.	Adopt flexible and transparent university structures. Strengthen coordination between actors in the system and ensure effective participation.
Jump ⁽²⁸⁾ / Analyze the accreditation of postgraduate programs by foreign agencies and its regulatory impact.	Qualitative historical-comparative study with interviews and document analysis (two cases).	Foreign accreditation operates as a parallel system to the state system. Private universities prioritize this accreditation for international positioning. Curricular adaptations occur without any link to national accreditation.	Articulate national standards with international trends. Deepen comparative studies on institutional responses by sector and discipline.

The studies on the Argentine accreditation system summarized in table 3 highlight advances and tensions

that complement or contrast with the elements described for this country in table 1. Calderón et al.⁽²⁴⁾ agree on the need for mandatory institutional evaluation for universities but identify weaknesses not initially mentioned, noting that LES 24521 limits university autonomy in critical areas such as faculty selection and financing, lacks uniform quality standards, and does not guarantee equitable participation in governance. These findings question the effectiveness of the regulatory framework in promoting substantive improvement, an aspect that Table 1 presents as a focus on “adaptation to common standards” without delving into its practical limitations.

Table 4 integrates eight studies that analyzed essential components of the Chilean higher education accreditation system. The studies document significant progress in the institutional processes promoted by the CNA, particularly in the implementation of mandatory evaluation mechanisms and their linkage to international standards. However, they also highlight challenges such as biases in accreditation decision-making processes, tensions between standardization and institutional diversity, and the disconnect between formal requirements and their actual impact on educational quality.

Table 4. Summary of research on the Chilean higher education accreditation system

Author(s) / Objective of the Study	(Year)	Methodology	Main Findings	Recommendations
Ganga et al. ⁽²⁹⁾ / Evaluate the performance of Chilean universities in international rankings.		Exploratory study with descriptive and comparative analysis of databases and articles.	Three groups of universities stand out: global leaders, regional benchmarks, and emerging participants. Rankings prioritize specific indicators, which distorts the overall perception of quality.	Use rankings as a complementary tool, not the only one, to evaluate university quality. Consider methodological biases and diversify evaluation sources.
Pineda and Salazar ⁽³⁰⁾ / Analyze the impact of managerialism on academic job security in Chile.		Multilevel regression analysis of 25,545 observations (1980-2018) in Chile, Colombia, Germany, and the US.	Accreditation in Chile correlates with greater academic job stability, in contrast to the US, where it predicts insecurity. The processes in Chile integrate hiring practices that favor stability.	In Chile, the integration between accreditation and job stability can serve as a reference for other systems. Strengthen investment in the academic profession to avoid administrative rituals with no real impact.
Barroilhet et al. ⁽³¹⁾ / Evaluating biases in institutional accreditation decisions in Chile.		Empirical study on voting patterns of CNA commissioners (2013-2016).	Commissioners favor institutions in their conglomerate, which reveals conflicts of interest. Post-2011 transparency increased rigor, but incentives for bias persist.	Reform commissioner appointment mechanisms, increase transparency and independence in accreditation decisions.
Celis and Véliz ⁽³²⁾ / Evaluate the impact of accreditation on Chilean graduate programs.		Qualitative study with interviews, visits, and document analysis in eight programs.	Accreditation promoted internationalization and academic productivity, but penalizes multidisciplinary innovation and student diversity due to rigid disciplinary standards.	Adapt accreditation criteria to multidisciplinary approaches and promote curricular flexibility.
López et al. ⁽³³⁾ / Review accreditation processes and their effects on Chilean universities.		Qualitative meta-evaluation of academic literature and secondary sources.	The Chilean system strengthens institutional management but prioritizes administrative compliance over a culture of quality. Accreditation reduces non-autonomous institutions and homogenizes results.	Improve the objectivity of criteria, respond to institutional diversity, and integrate quality into university management.
Ramírez and Latorre ⁽³⁴⁾ / Link strategic planning with internationalization and accreditation in Chile.		Qualitative-quantitative analysis of strategic plans in 29 universities.	Universities prioritize meeting accreditation criteria over comprehensive internationalization models. Only 27 % adopt integrated approaches, which limits the impact on communities.	Promote holistic internationalization models aligned with global standards and local needs.
Davila and Maillet ⁽³⁵⁾ / Analyze the design and implementation of accreditation in Chile (2006-2018).		Mixed methods, including interviews with key actors.	The link between accreditation and funding creates incentives that weaken quality mechanisms by prioritizing formal compliance over substantive improvement.	Review financial links and strengthen qualitative approaches to evaluation to ensure real educational improvement.
Duque ⁽³⁶⁾ / Compare quality assurance systems in Chile and Colombia.		Comparative analysis from a political sociology perspective of public policy instruments.	Chile prioritizes a flexible approach to quality, while Colombia seeks excellence. Both systems reflect political and symbolic dimensions beyond the technical.	Consider political dimensions in the design of quality systems to avoid unintended effects.

The studies on the Chilean accreditation system summarized in table 3 highlight advances and challenges

that complement or contrast with the aspects described for this country in table 1. Pineda and Salazar⁽³⁰⁾ identify that accreditation is associated with greater academic job stability, which coincides with the focus on strategic management and institutional resources that was noted. However, this effect contrasts with other countries, where it predicts insecurity, indicating the particularity of the Chilean context. Ganga et al.⁽²⁹⁾ confirm the presence of Chilean universities in global rankings, in line with the international links mentioned in table 1, but warn of methodological distortions that limit a comprehensive assessment of quality.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research show that the accreditation systems in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile share a solid institutional foundation, supported by specialized agencies (ANEAES, CONEAU, CNA) and regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring educational quality. However, as Salazar et al.⁽³⁷⁾ point out, the effectiveness of these systems depends on their ability to adapt to new paradigms such as post-pandemic virtual education.⁽³⁸⁾ In this regard, it can be seen that Chile is recognized in global rankings linked to international standards. Still, gaps persist between formal indicators and tangible social outcomes, a limitation that these authors attribute to the rigidity of traditional criteria in dynamic educational contexts. Soria et al.⁽³⁹⁾, for their part, highlight that the absence of official national rankings in Argentina and Paraguay reinforces the dependence on global measurements, which coincides with the results of this research.

In parallel with this criticism, Alarcón et al.⁽⁴⁰⁾ provide a comparative perspective on the effects of managerialism in the academic profession. This phenomenon is in line with the findings in Chile, where accreditation is associated with job stability but also with pressure for research productivity. The preference for combining teaching and research, identified in Argentina and Chile by these authors, contrasts with the prioritization of administrative indicators in local accreditation processes, indicating a dissonance between institutional expectations and actual academic practices. This tension highlights the importance of balancing quality standards with curricular flexibility, as proposed by Celis and Véliz⁽³²⁾ for the Chilean case.

This problem is amplified when considering the psychosocial effects of accreditation. Villafuerte et al.⁽⁴¹⁾ demonstrate that rigid evaluation processes generate anxiety among teachers, a finding that coincides with the institutional resistance identified in Paraguay and Argentina. The requirement for international certifications, as observed in Chile, could exacerbate this emotional burden if resilient support mechanisms are not implemented, as recommended by these authors. In Argentina, where external accreditation operates as a parallel system, the lack of regulatory coordination increases administrative pressure, a factor that Salto⁽⁴²⁾ links to the “bureaucratic burden” that limits institutions’ ability to meet quality standards.

Given this scenario, there is a need to rethink evaluation models toward more comprehensive and adaptive approaches. The establishment of parallel and supportive processes for the continuous evaluation of different aspects is evidence of a more contextualized and flexible assessment, more in line with diverse social, cultural, and educational realities.⁽⁴²⁾ These processes not only tend to change in the form of proposals for improvement on what has been evaluated previously, but also, due to their usefulness, new evaluation processes are added with greater consensus among the evaluators involved.⁽⁴³⁾ Locally, they reinforce their self-evaluation process; students reinforce their evaluation processes, and so on. This is consistent with the additive and non-restrictive purpose of checklists, qualitative and quantitative mechanisms, and, in general, those mechanisms that go beyond the merely situational and temporary.

It is essential to recognize that this research focused exclusively on the accreditation systems of Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile, which limits the possibility of generalizing the results to other Latin American or international contexts. This selection is based on the institutional and regulatory similarities between these countries, as well as the availability of consolidated information that allowed for an in-depth and detailed comparative analysis. However, future research could broaden the scope to include other countries with different educational structures, which would provide a more comprehensive and diverse view of the phenomenon of accreditation in the region.

Among the strengths of this study is the comparative approach adopted, which allowed us to identify both similarities in the structure and functioning of accreditation systems and the particularities and challenges of each country analyzed. In addition, the integration of psychosocial and administrative perspectives contributes to a more holistic understanding of the impact of accreditation on educational quality and the well-being of the leading actors involved, especially teachers. Similarly, the critical analysis of the tensions between formal standards and practical realities provides a solid basis for proposing improvements based on empirical evidence.

Looking ahead, it is essential to move toward more flexible, contextualized, and inclusive evaluation models that can adapt to the changing dynamics of higher education, particularly in a post-pandemic scenario where virtualization and diversification of teaching have taken center stage. It is also recommended to study the psychosocial impact of accreditation processes further, promoting the development of emotional and professional support mechanisms for teachers to mitigate the adverse effects associated with the evaluation burden. Finally, fostering broader consensus among institutional and academic actors will contribute to the

design of more comprehensive and sustainable accreditation systems that strengthen educational quality without sacrificing the well-being of its participants.

I suggest adding the limitations of the study. For example, only three countries were analyzed, and the reason for this limitation was justified. I could also highlight the research's strengths and prospects.

CONCLUSIONS

A comparative analysis of institutional accreditation systems in higher education in Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile, under the regulations in force in 2024, reveals common patterns and critical differences. All three countries have specialized agencies (ANEAES, CONEAU, CNA) and legal frameworks aimed at ensuring educational quality, although there are differences in their implementation. Paraguay prioritizes social relevance under a voluntary scheme, but faces challenges such as subjectivity in its assessment tools and a disconnect between formal indicators and real impact. Argentina, with a compulsory system focused on common standards, faces regulatory rigidity that limits university autonomy and fragmentation between national and international criteria. Chile, through a mandatory progressive model, has achieved global recognition, but has biases in decision-making processes and disciplinary rigidity that hinder academic innovation.

These results indicate that the systems analyzed, although structured, require reforms to overcome gaps between administrative formalism and substantive improvement. It is considered relevant to update regulations to incorporate post-pandemic virtual education standards, mitigate biases through transparent mechanisms for appointing evaluators, promote curricular flexibility that integrates multidisciplinary approaches, and strengthen the link between funding and tangible educational outcomes. Convergence toward models that balance standardization with adaptability, institutional autonomy with accountability, and technical rigor with academic well-being is an essential path for consolidating adequate, relevant, and sustainable accreditation systems in the region.

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FUNDING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

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